

Title: **U.S. AMBASSADOR CELEBRATES EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY**

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Description: **Five CSCOMs were selected to receive the coveted *Ciwara d'Or* Excellence Award for high quality service delivery. This article describes the ceremony for the first CSCOM to receive the award—Dangassa**

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Article:

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It was jubilation all over Dangassa, a village about 80 km south of Bamako, on February 16, 2006. The coveted *Ciwara d'Or* Award was conferred on the Community Health Center (CSCOM) of the village and the management staff, an unprecedented event in Mali. The “*Ciwara*” is an iconic Malian symbol representing excellence, and “*d'Or*” is its gold standard. The accreditation ceremony, presided over by the Minister of Health and the US Ambassador, attracted an impressive crowd from many neighboring villages and communities covered by the CSCOM.

The *Ciwara d'Or* Initiative, developed by the USAID Mali-funded *Keneya Ciwara* Project through CARE International, is an interactive selection process involving local authorities, health centers and communities, which aims to improve the quality of basic health services. The Initiative covers 236 CSCOMs in 11 circles nationwide and two communes in the district of Bamako.

The *Ciwara d'Or* is awarded based on a set of criteria developed by community representatives and service providers. The criteria set strict standards for services offered by the health center; for equipment and materials; and requires the presence of adequately trained health personnel. It also requires the active participation of the health center management committee. Prior to awarding the *Ciwara d'Or*, a quality assessment committee organizes a competition between community health centers (CSCOMs) to motivate them to improve the quality of their services. The *Ciwara d'Or* quality label is

jointly awarded by the health district quality assessment team, local administrative and political authorities and the National Directorate of Health, and is given to the CSCOM which has the highest scores for quality health care service delivery.

The accreditation ceremony, presided over by Mme Maiga Zeinab Mint Youba, Minister of Health, was graced by the presence of the US Ambassador to Mali, Terrence P. McCulley, the USAID Mali Mission Director, Alex Newton, and members of USAID Mali Mission Health Team.

Kankou Moussa Camara, the President of CSCOM of Dangassa, said “We feel highly honored that our CSCOM is being awarded the highest award of the competition. Local communities and villagers will do everything they can to ensure the sustainability of this facility.”

The US Ambassador told the residents of Dangassa and surrounding communities that they should be proud of their CSCOM for its having been awarded the *Ciwara d’Or*, and assured them that USAID and the American People will continue to support Mali and its people in their development efforts. He encouraged them to continue to work together, and quoted the Malian proverb “one finger alone cannot lift a stone”.

A skit performed by Dangassa youth highlighted the importance of quality health services and best practices, including birth spacing, and hygiene. Following the youth’s performance, the Minister of Health addressed the assembled crowd: “the accreditation ceremony in Dangassa complements Mali’s Ten-Year Health and Social Development Program, especially regarding the scaling up and improvement of the quality of health services”

The highlight of the event was the presentation of the *Ciwara d’Or* Award to the President of the CSCOM of Dangassa by the Minister. The ceremony was completed by a visit to the CSCOM that received the *Ciwara d’Or* Accreditation.

**A beneficiary of the award-winning Dangassa
CSCOM**

**Kankou Moussa Camara, President of the
CSCOM of Dangassa, displaying the *Ciwara d'Or*
Award to members of the community.**

**Minister of Health Maïga Zeinab Mint Youba, US
Ambassador to Mali Terrence P. McCulley, and
Dangassa CSCOM President, Kankou Moussa Camara
(in blue), at the unveiling the Ciwara d'Or Award in
Dangassa.**